

RELENTLESS LOVE: I CAN GET BETTER!

Scripture used: [Jonah 3:1-10 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

Pastor Hurmon picked back up the story of Jonah this week. We revisited the third chapter, where Jonah is told to go to Nineveh a second time by God, and he obeys. The people quickly repent, and God changes His plan to destroy the city. This sequence of changes highlights the immense impact we can have on the world when we align ourselves with God's plan. Jonah was only one person, yet God worked through him to redeem an entire city of over 120,000 in one day! That sort of change seems overwhelming to us because we focus on the end result. We forget that all Jonah had to do was listen to God and just get started. God did the rest! We see a similar story in the inspirational story of Dr. Ben Carson, a pioneering African-American doctor. He was raised with his brother by a single mother. Each week during their childhood, Dr. Carson and his brother were forced to write two book reports and study the book of Proverbs. These simple acts, done over the course of many years, transformed a poor student with anger issues into a top student who went on to perform groundbreaking surgeries. This is the power of aligning ourselves with God's plan to change the world. As a side note, Pastor Hurmon also added the footnote that while individuals may have stronger opinions about Dr. Carson when he entered politics, we shouldn't require someone to be "just like us" in order to learn from the ways God has worked in their lives; no matter what our political inclinations are, and NBCC is a community of Jesus followers across the political spectrum, God has called us all to be, first and foremost, a light for His love and peacemakers in the world.

KEY POINTS

- 1. Be committed to reprogram your thinking.** With God, there are no failures. There are only learning opportunities. Fortunately, God shaped us so our brains are capable of changing their structure and function. By changing the way we think, we change the way we act, and we also change our long-term practices. This is a positive cycle: think it, say it, do it, think it, say it, do it... The Ninevites also show us that even unlikely change is possible if God is in the midst of it.
- 2. Be committed to reframing your actions.** We are not expected to do everything ourselves. In fact, God asks us to do only a "small amount" and then rewards us for even that little bit of faithfulness. This is the story of the servant in [Matthew 25:23 \(NLT\)](#). That's the same thing that happened with Jonah. It took over 3 days to walk across the city of Nineveh, it was so big. And yet Jonah only walked for a day before he had managed to convince the entire city to repent. God didn't need him to do everything. He just needed to begin.
- 3. Change requires a partnership with me, God, and others.** Most of the story of Jonah focuses on him and God. But the real change happened with the people of Nineveh. Read [Jonah 3:5 \(MSG\)](#) again. It wasn't the rich or the poor who listened. It wasn't the leaders or the followers. It was everyone. Every person in the city joined in this redemptive movement. When God asks us to do something different that requires a change, we should expect the same kind of dynamic. There will be "others" who join in our part of God's plan, and in fact, sometimes "others" are necessary to help us with our own change, transformation, and journey. Make sure you are ready to include them!

DISCUSSION

- 1) HEAR** - Pastor Hurmon reminded us of three powerful truths during this sermon. With God, each of us can change. With God, each of us can grow. And with God, each of us can get better! These are foundational principles on which we can build a wonderful life. Through Jonah, God was able to redeem an entire city in a few days. This is a Biblical example of a successful partnership, and God wants to partner with us in the same way. What unlikely change is God putting on your heart right now?
- 2) UNDERSTAND** - Consider the transformation of the Ninevites in [Jonah 3:1-10 \(NLT\)](#). We can easily get lost in negative thinking that only looks at what we can't do, not what God can do. We might think we are too young or too old, too rich or too poor, or too busy. That kind of thinking robs us of any ability to change. Instead we must focus on something small that we can do consistently. Ask yourself "What is one area I will choose to be faithful in order to drive change in my life?"
- 3) DO** - Prayerfully ask God to reveal that one area where you can partner with Him. If you are tempted to give up, turn to [Philippians 4:13 \(NLT\)](#) and hold onto the promise that you can "do everything through Christ, who gives me strength."